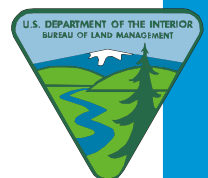
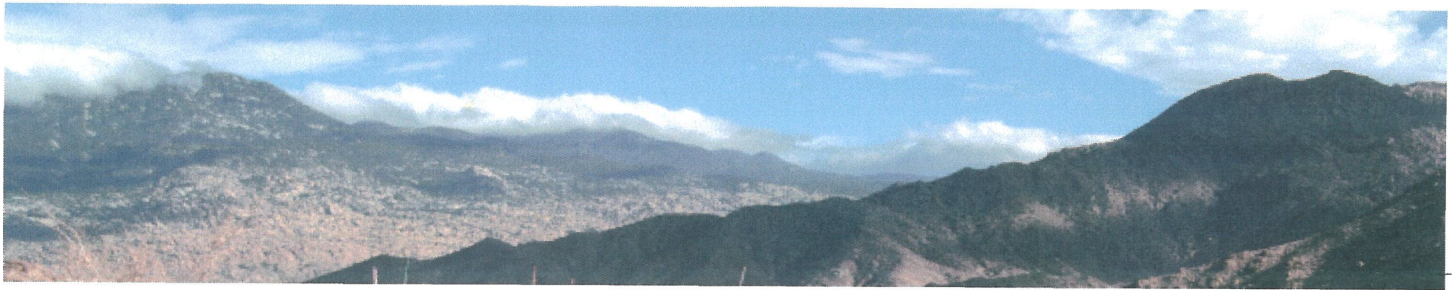


***Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains  
National Monument***

**Management Assessment**  
February 13-16, 2006





## Preface

This document discusses and formalizes the results of a Management Assessment recently completed for the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. The Assessment was a joint effort by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (FS). A four member team (two resource professionals from each agency experienced in working with monuments) initially reviewed relevant subject material about the Monument. During the week of February 13-16, 2006, they met with and interviewed agency personnel, external groups and other agencies associated with the Monument. They subsequently prepared their findings and recommendations using a PowerPoint format and presented it to local, State, and Regional BLM and FS managers on March 20.

The results of the Assessment are within this report. Included is a short introduction about the Monument, the purpose and need for the Assessment, the persons or groups interviewed, an outline of the issues addressed by the Assessment Team along with their findings and recommendations, and the names and titles of the Assessment Team.

The Assessment was deemed a success by both agencies. We thank the agency personnel who took part in the Assessment, and also give special thanks to the outside partners who gave their own time and honest input concerning our management of the Monument. Finally, we thank the Assessment Team who not only traveled a great distance but committed many hours in gathering information and composing this report. This Assessment could not have been completed without everyone's help.

Both the FS and the BLM are committed to use the Team's observations and recommendations as a framework to guide future management of the Monument. The Assessment is extremely helpful in not only improving our successful relationship with Monument partners but in providing new and innovative ideas that ensure the Monument's unique values are protected for future generations.

Mike Pool, State Director,  
Bureau of Land Management, California

5/5/06  
Date

Bernie Weingardt, Regional Forester  
Forest Service, Region 5

5/12/06  
Date





## Background

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument was designated October 24, 2000 by enactment of the “Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Act of 2000” (Public Law 106-434). This 272,000-acre Monument encompasses land managed by the BLM, FS, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Fish and Game, local governments, and private owners.

The Act created the first congressionally designated National Monument to be jointly managed by the BLM and FS. The BLM and FS only manage the Federal lands within the National Monument but do so in consultation and cooperation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, other Federal agencies, State agencies and local governments.

The Act also established a Monument Advisory Committee (MAC) which advises the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture with respect to the preparation and implementation of a management plan. The MAC has been in place since shortly after the Monument was established. The agencies also work closely with Friends of the Desert Mountains, and many other active partners and volunteers in helping manage the Monument.

Shortly after the Monument was established, a formal office with staff was established to manage the Monument. The Monument Manager is located in the BLM Palm Springs/South Coast Field Office and reports directly to the managers of the local BLM Field Office and Ranger District.

In February 2004, the BLM and FS completed a Monument management plan. It provides the overall

strategy for managing the Monument within the foreseeable future. It generally fulfills the following needs:

- Preserve nationally significant biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational, and scientific values found within the Monument;
- Secure now and for future generations, the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas, wildlife, land forms, and natural and cultural resources, and to recreate therein;
- Manage the Monument in coordination, cooperation and consultation with private interests, the local advisory committee, with Federal, Tribal, State, and local government agencies, and with interested owners of private property and holders of valid existing rights within the Monument boundary; and
- Coordinate BLM and FS management activities across jurisdictional boundaries.

## Purpose and Description of the Assessment

It has been over five years since designation of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Looking back, the managing agencies, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and other Monument partners take great pride in their many achievements towards making the Monument a true success story. During this period and as mentioned previously, the following were accomplished:

- A Monument Advisory Committee (MAC) was formed that from the start has been an active partner in determining the future vision for the Monument;



- An interagency Monument staff has been established that has since completed a management plan and has worked diligently to meet the needs and expectations of the local community;
- The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians has continued to lead in documenting and protecting cultural treasures within the Monument; and
- The Monument partners have developed impressive outreach material that has not only instilled ownership of the Monument within the Coachella Valley but has also highlighted the Monument internationally.

These are only a small fraction of the success stories. Many other significant accomplishments could also be listed.

This five-year anniversary was also a watershed moment for the Monument. Recently, there have been substantial changes to the National Monument Board of Directors. In addition, the agencies, tribes, and partners were near finalizing a management “blueprint” outlining actions to be implemented through the Monument Plan. This “blueprint’s” primary focus was on a five- to ten-year vision tied to existing and potential budgets. Given these developments, BLM and Forest Service management decided it was an ideal time for an agency team outside the Monument to assess both how well the Monument is doing and if the blueprint for the future is correct or could be improved. The agencies called this a “Monument Assessment.” The MAC also completed its own assessment of agency effectiveness as well as its continuing role in helping to manage the Monument. Both the agencies and MAC’s goal was that both efforts are forward looking and are beneficial for the Monument.

As part of the Monument Assessment, the BLM and Forest Service assigned two principal tasks for the Review Team: 1) assess and validate specific issues through the review of documents and through

interviews (generally ½ hour or less) of key players associated with management of the Monument, and 2) present to the local BLM/FS management team and partners their observations and potential recommendations with a short follow-up report.

Some of the issues that were addressed included:

- Monument accomplishments to date;
- The strategy for implementing the goals and objectives of the Monument Plan;
- The success of the BLM and FS cooperative effort in managing the Monument;
- The success of the managing agencies’ (BLM and FS) collaboration with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, MAC, Friends of the Desert Mountains, and other partners in helping manage the Monument; and
- The success of connecting the Monument with the local communities.

The Review Team completed a close-out and PowerPoint presentation to the managing agencies and their partners that provided observations and recommendations to strengthen interagency coordination, Monument partnerships, and implementation actions over the next five years.

To help the Review Team in the Assessment, particularly the interviews, a list of review materials about the Monument was provided to them (Attachment 1). A list of issues or subjects that could have been brought up through the interviews or could have been addressed as a part of the interviews was also provided (Attachment 2). These issues/subjects were not all inclusive and the Team attempted to remain focused on the two tasks above.



## The Teams Results and Findings – “PowerPoint Presentation”

A PowerPoint presentation was presented to the both agencies’ managers at the local and State/Region level. Their finding are summarized below.

### I. Team’s Task and Issues Addressed

The Team recognized that the Monument was indeed a “Diamond in the Rough”. They immediately looked at the Purpose and Need described above and rephrased the initial task for the interviews as follows:

1. Assess and validate specific issues identified by management through review of documents and interviews.
2. Present to local FS/BLM management the Team’s observations and recommendations with a follow-up report.

The issues that required validation and assessment were:

1. Monument accomplishments to date.
2. Strategy for implementing goals and objectives of Plan and success of BLM and FS cooperative effort in management of Monument
3. Success of collaboration with MAC, Tribe, Friends of the Desert Mountains, etc. and success of connecting Monument to the communities.

### II. Groups Interviewed and Team’s Impressions

The Assessment Team interviewed groups both inside and outside the managing agencies. They included:

#### External Groups

- MAC and members
- Friends of the Desert Mountains and its members
- Congresswoman Bono’s Chief of Staff
- City Council members and others from local communities
- Bighorn Institute
- Other interested groups

#### Internal Groups

- BLM District and Field Office managers
- BLM Field Office staff
- Acting Monument Manager and staff
- FS District Ranger and staff
- FS Forest Supervisor and staff
- Chairman and other members and staff from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
- California State Parks staff





The Interview process was twofold. The Team listened to impressions/thoughts of interviewees and asked specific questions. The key questions they addressed were:

- Initial thoughts and input?
- What is the value of the Monument?
- What have been the successes in the last five years?
- What would success look like in the next five years?
- What are the partnership opportunities?

The team came away from the interviews with a number of impressions. The key impressions were:

- Passion about the Monument: The passion for the Monument, internally and externally, is strong.
- Many opportunities: Opportunities are ripe. There could be a “harmonic convergence” for many types of opportunities.
- Desire: There is strong desire from everyone that more wants to be done.
- Envy: There is a juxtaposition of Monument next to cities with educated, affluent, active, and supportive population.
- Positive: Everyone was positive about this Assessment. The Assessment was a great public relations effort.
- Tribal cooperation: This Monument is a model of Tribal/federal coordination and cooperation.
- Success: The people interviewed strongly feel the agencies and partners have come a long way in five years.
- Balancing: The Monument faces difficult challenges of balancing endangered species recovery with development and a growing demand for access and recreation.
- More staff: There are many opportunities but not enough staff. Partnerships are critical to exploit those opportunities.
- Existence: “The Monument” does not yet exist in the public’s mind.
- Relationships: Relationships are the key for success.

### III. Format Used by Team for Presentation

The Team used the interviews to take a detailed look at the following issues that needed validation:

- Monument accomplishments,
- BLM/FS coordinated strategy for implementation and management, and
- Success of collaboration



For each of the above issues they presented their findings using the following format:

- What’s working
- Findings
- Recommendations

Using this format, the following are the Teams observations and recommendations that should be used in managing the Monument.



## Monument Accomplishments

### What's Working?

- The Management Plan was completed;
- The MAC is established and working;
- The Monument has received national media exposure – e.g. magazines;
- There has been a successful land acquisition partnership that has resulted in purchase, easements, and exchanges;
- Numerous cultural resources surveys and training have been accomplished through partnerships; and
- There has been successful outreach through interpretive programs, the “Voices of the Monument” DVD, educational books, school programs.

### Findings:

- Nearly everyone was proud of the accomplishments and have lots of passion;
- The energy, coordination, and involvement initiated through planning effort have “dampened” since plan was completed (within agencies or partners);
- Partnership efforts and successes for some resource programs lag behind others (heritage, fire, lands looking good; wildlife, wilderness, recreation, trails, interpretation and environmental education needs attention); and
- There is potential there for immediate remedy; and
- Communication about what has been accomplished has been spotty.

### Recommendation:

- The agencies and partners need to increase attention about what has and is being done.

## BLM/FS Coordinated Strategy for Implementation & Management

### What's Working?

- The sheep research and BLM/Institute relationship is positive;
- The Trails Plan/Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan is completed;
- There are numerous trailheads and some trail construction;
- Salt cedar has been eradicated through Tribal partnership;
- There are numerous outreach efforts;
- There have been cultural resources surveys and Tribal outreach; and
- The MAC has been formed and is used, there is an existing Friends, Trails, State Parks, Visitor Center that are being used, and there are aggressive effort to form new “Friends” groups.

### Findings:

- Need for a game plan for on-the-ground management and plan implementation;
- Increase the overall internal leadership;
- A need for more connection between Monument goals/objectives/workload priorities/budget;
- A need for more coordination between the FS/BLM staff;
- Externals perceive FS as a minor player;
- External groups believe Monument manager leadership is critical and must be provided the authority and budget to get the work done;



- The Monument budget is seen as confusing;
- The Monument budget is sometimes re-directed/re-programmed;
- Engagement of FS leadership (from Valley perspective) needs to be increased;
- There is no master plan for outreach particularly for users in Idyllwild, Pinion, and the Valley area; and
- More management guidance to staff would be helpful.

#### Recommendation:

- The agencies need to further define the role/skills of a successful Monument manager;
- Fill the Monument Manager position and provide the tools to be the Federal face of the Monument;
- Layout the Monument vision – develop a universal message - make it “The Monument”;
- Identify clear and concise work priorities and annual budget tiered off the plan and the common vision, with BLM/FS/MAC/Friends and provide feedback on accomplishments;
- FS management needs to clearly portray the priority of the Monument to staff that the Monument and follow-up with support;
- Continue to schedule BLM/FS program coordination through the Monument Manager;
- Develop a needs assessment for outreach (Master Plan) and determine what is needed and for who, and then determine the tools needed to deliver; and
- The Monument offers significant opportunities for BLM/FS to get out the of traditional agency box. Staff should train, mentor and manage volunteers so to be the “managers” of the Monument (using the Golden Gate model).

## Success of Collaboration

#### What’s Working?

- Many outside partners have expressed strong support and kudos on the Monuments collaboration efforts;
- The MAC is the “community voice” for the Monument. They are strong, supportive, committed, and talented;
- The Friend of the Desert Mountains (FODM) is very active with a strong commitment to land acquisition for the Monument;
- The Monument is a model for positive Tribal/federal relations; and
- BLM and Bighorn Institute have a very good relationship both with research and education.

#### Findings:

- Monument and MAC needs to again focus on setting priorities and achieving them;
- The MAC is very beneficial in advising, problem-solving, and building bridges;
- Agencies need to utilize the MAC efficiently;
- There are many opportunity for involvement by other Tribes (Santa Rosa, Morongo Valley, Torres Martinez, etc.);
- The Valley provides unique opportunities for collaboration and partnership with a number of other groups, e.g. trails and equestrian groups, new cultural history museum, tourism groups, business community;
- Opportunities with to use the skills and the involvement of State Parks need to be increased as they appear ready to be more involved with Monument management;
- There are endless opportunities for outreach - the Monument has only scratched the surface;





- There are opportunities to provide interpretation at many locations (other Visitor Centers, libraries, hotels, tram, etc.) and a multi-partner presence on Mondays;
- The FODM is evolving an interpretation/education mission and communication needs to be expanded; and
- All the communities have interest and money and want to help and be involved. They need to be utilized more.

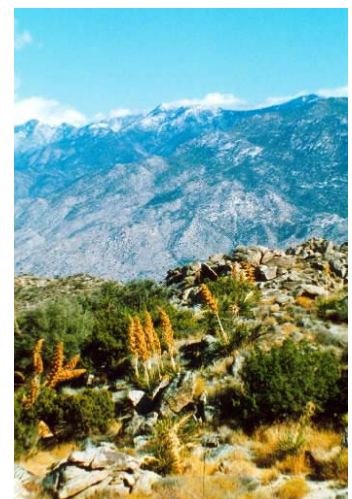
#### Recommendations:

- The MAC and agencies need to continue to work together to focus their relationship and make it more efficient and strategic (e.g., no one want to have “laborious budget reviews”);
- Increase public participation to speak at MAC;
- Encourage MAC to go on a “retreat” and review other partnership successes (e.g., visitor center partnerships, philosophy – Golden Gate, Timucuan);
- Actively engage other tribes in management of the Monument;
- Actively engage State Parks in management of the Monument;
- FODM should communicate their mission beyond the just land acquisition;
- Help increase FODM membership;
- Explore with FODM the possibility of establishing a Foundation;
- Grow and expand interpretation/education program through partnership efforts (Friends, Museums, volunteers, other);
- Include a Monument staffer as official liaison or ex-officio board member with FODM;
- Pursue other off-site marketing and education opportunities such as with the tram and other visitor centers; and
- Find ways to tap into community interest and money (e.g., include purchase of boundary signs).

### Additional Recommendations by the Team

The Team felt that there was “Low Hanging Fruit” the Monument should explore in the future.

- Oral histories;
- Branding/common vision/”one Monument”;
- Monument DVDs/book distribution;
- Signs/boundaries;
- Trail groups as volunteer potential;
- Land acquisition;
- Year-round recreation;
- Law enforcement/marijuana eradication;
- Visitor Center staff knowledge of Monument rules, programs, and policies.



## Monument Assessment Team

The team included individuals who are acquainted or who have worked with other Monuments and have substantial management experience. The members were:

**Rob Roudabush**

BLM, WO Group Manager for the NLCS

**Jan Engert**

FS, WO, Manager of the National Partnership Office

**Valerie Guardia**

FS, Acting Regional Director for Recreation, Wilderness, and Heritage

**Carolyn Shelton**

BLM, Assistant Monument Manager, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

